



September 2023

Keeping safe while securing and covering loads on vehicles

Workers can be exposed to risks to their health and safety while securing and covering loads on vehicles. Businesses who have workers securing and covering loads on their vehicles, or at their worksite, must work together to manage these risks.

This quick guide offers information for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) on how you can work together with other PCBUs and your workers to eliminate and minimise health and safety risks while securing and covering loads. This includes things like tarping, tying down loads, and using curtain siders.

This quick guide does not provide technical specifications on **how** loads should be covered or secured (see Waka Kotahi’s [Truck Loading Code](#) and [Land Transport Rules](#) for this information).

This quick guide should be read alongside WorkSafe’s good practice guidelines [Managing work site traffic](#) which contains information about general risk management principles for worksites where vehicles and mobile plant are present.

This quick guide applies to all work sites, vehicles and mobile plant, across all industries where load securing and covering is done. For example:

EXAMPLES OF WORKSITES	EXAMPLES OF VEHICLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction sites (civil and residential) - Farms and forestry sites - Trucking/transport yards - Waste transfer stations - Timber yards - Quarries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tip truck - Truck and trailer - Side tipper - Bin truck - Curtain sider - Flat deck

What could go wrong when securing or covering loads?

Examples of ways workers can be harmed while securing or covering loads include:

- sprains and strains, and back injuries (known as musculoskeletal harm) from handling heavy, unwieldy equipment. For example, when:
 - positioning large tarps
 - pulling curtains
 - lifting other heavy load securing gear
- being struck by gear, such as curtain sider buckles or pillars, in windy conditions
- crush or impact injuries from poorly placed or unbalanced loads falling onto workers
- falling from height when climbing on the top or sides of loads, or when standing on a vehicle deck
- colliding with or being struck by other worksite traffic in the area.

Suggested control measures for managing health and safety risks while load securing or covering loads

Eliminating the risk is the preferred step to take when managing risk. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, you must take steps to minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Listed below are some examples of ways to minimise health and safety risks to workers while they are securing or covering loads.

Site-related control measures

- Consider installing vehicle access platforms so workers can more safely access the vehicle deck/load (see Figure 1).
- Make sure the work area is flat and level.
- Consider the effects of the wind at the site. Where possible choose sheltered areas to minimise the effects of wind on tarps and curtain sides.
- Set an exclusion zone around the vehicle to keep other vehicles and workers not directly involved at a safe distance from the work activity. For more information see Worksafe's good practice guidelines [Managing work site traffic](#)

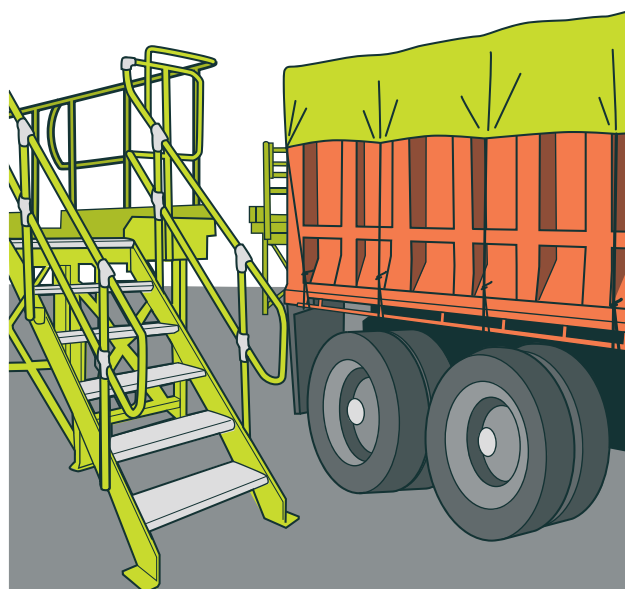


FIGURE 1: Access platform

Vehicle-related control measures

- Use a vehicle that has an automated tarping cover to avoid manual tarping (see Figure 2).
- Make sure all load securing and covering components are in good working order. This could be done at the same time the vehicle's pre-trip safety inspection is done.
- Make sure all equipment is maintained according to manufacturer guidelines and complies with all relevant regulations (such as keeping all required certifications current).
- Use the lightest, smallest tarps and load securing materials possible (while still maintaining load security and complying with the requirements of the Truck Loading Code).

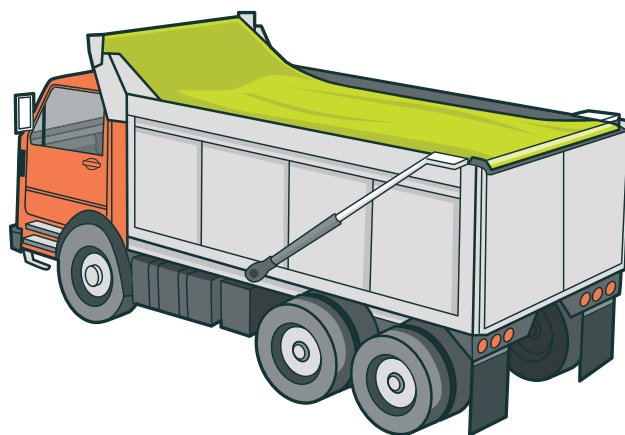


FIGURE 2: Truck with an automated tarping cover

Worker-related control measures

- Make sure there are sufficient workers to do the task. For example, where tarping must be done manually consider having two or more workers help to reduce the physical demand on one person.
- Have workers do a visual check for signs that a load may have moved or become unstable. If it does look unstable, take additional precautions to avoid the load falling onto workers.
- Make sure your workers have the appropriate training and knowledge to carry out their work in a manner that is safe for themselves and those around them.
- Make sure workers have the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) and are wearing/using it correctly. Remember that using PPE to manage risks should be the last resort after all other reasonably practicable steps have been taken to manage the risk.

The above lists are examples of possible control measures. As a PCBU you must assess what is reasonably practicable for your circumstances when deciding on control measures. For information on how to decide what is reasonably practicable, see WorkSafe's fact sheet [Reasonably practicable](#)

PCBUs must work together to manage risk

Where more than one PCBU is operating at a worksite (for example, where the worksite is controlled by one PCBU but the visiting vehicles are controlled by another), the PCBUs will likely have health and safety duties for the same risks. This is known as overlapping duties.

PCBUs should decide together how the risks will be managed. For example, they could agree that the PCBU that manages the worksite focuses on control measures related to their worksite layout, while the PCBU whose vehicles visit the worksite focuses on control measures related to their vehicles and drivers. PCBUs should work together to establish safe practices for activities that involve workers from both PCBUs, such as when securing or covering loads.

One PCBU cannot push the responsibility to manage risk onto another PCBU and they cannot contract out of their responsibilities to manage risk. For example, it is not appropriate for site controllers to ask truck

drivers to move off their site to secure or cover a load because they do not have safe facilities at their site. PCBUs must work together to come up with a solution that keeps everyone safe.

For more information see [Section 2.0: Working together with other PCBUs of WorkSafe's good practice guidelines Managing work site traffic](#)

Engage with your workers

Ask your workers for their ideas and opinions before making decisions relating to their health and safety at work. This includes managing the risks associated with load securing and covering. They may be able to help you identify risks and offer suggestions on how those risks can be managed.

More information

[Managing work site traffic](#)

[Working at height](#)

[Reasonably practicable](#)

[NZTA - Truck Loading Code](#)

[Waka Kotahi Land Transport Rules](#)